

Character Map: "The Greedy Porcupine: A Shoshone Tale"

Life Skills:

- Collaboration
- Effective Communication
- Responsible Citizenship

Curriculum Tie:

- **Language Arts**
3rd Grade
[Standard 7 Objective 2](#)
- **2nd Grade**
Content
[Standard 2 Objective 1](#)

Time Frame:

2 class periods that run 45 minutes each.

Group Size:

Small Groups

Summary:

Students will read the adaptation of "The Greedy Porcupine," a traditional Shoshone tale, in groups. In small groups, do a character map of the main character, Porcupine, to increase comprehension of the story as well as build language skills and cooperative skills.

Main Curriculum Tie:

Language Arts - 3rd Grade

[Standard 1 Objective 1](#)

Develop language through listening and speaking.

Career Connections:

- Social Humanitarian

Materials:

Handout of character study and character map (found in attachments of the instructional procedures; copies of the Shoshone traditional tale "The Greedy Porcupine," can be ordered through San Juan School District Media Center @ (435) 678-1230. CDs with downloadable copies of this story, and others, can also be purchased. The website link is included in this section.

Attachments

- [10582-8-14355-character_study_guide.pdf](#)
A character guide format for the students to complete in Session Two of the lesson.
- [character_web.gif](#)
A simple graphic organizer (character map) for one character.

Web Sites

- [San Juan School District Media Center](#)
Scroll down to the Media Center, where you can order copies of the book or order a CD with printable student copies.

Background For Teachers:

Teachers need to become familiar with the traditional tale of "The Greedy Porcupine." The book includes a glossary with words in the native language, as well as vocabulary and teaching points. The series has 35 books with stories from the Ute, Shoshone, Paiute, Goshute, White Mesa Ute, and Navajo tribes of Utah.

Attachments

- [Shoshone_tale_to_life.txt](#)

Deseret News article with background on the Shoshone Nation of Utah and a recent publication of a children's book written and illustrated by children from the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation in Utah.

Student Prior Knowledge:

The teacher should explain that traditional stories from the Native American people in Utah have been handed down from one storyteller to another over the ages. The story is adapted each time, depending upon the individual storyteller, but the same message is taught or reinforced in the storyline. Many traditional tales teach a lesson, and in this one, the lesson Porcupine learns is something we all should learn (to be grateful for the gifts and talents we are given, and not use them wrongly for our own pleasure or entertainment or gain). Have the students watch for the lesson Porcupine learns.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

Students will become familiar with a traditional Shoshone tale, "The Greedy Porcupine." Other Shoshone tales could be introduced, especially the 2005 publication/adaptation of "Coyote Steals Fire," written and illustrated by children from the Northwestern Band (Utah) of the Shoshone Nation.

The character mapping activity will increase comprehension of the story and provide the basis for the discussion in character education, tying in with the moral of the story.

Instructional Procedures:**SESSION ONE**

Preparation: Teachers will prepare the students for the activity by preparing a book center with traditional tales from various Native American tribes, specifically Goshute, Paiute, Shoshone, Ute (including Uintah-Ouray and White Mesa Ute), and Navajo, the five most prevalent tribes of Utah. Several excellent trade books are available in school libraries and city libraries (see bibliography for an excellent alphabet book on Native American peoples).

Prior to this comprehension activity, read the story "The Greedy Porcupine" as a class, with personal copies, an overhead transparency of the story, or paired, sharing a copy of the story. Discuss any unfamiliar words. Have students complete the character map handout. Time Frame: 45 minutes.

SESSION TWO

Hand out copies of character guide, found in the attachments of this lesson. Have students fill in the character guide with the name of the main character, Porcupine. As a whole class, instruct the students to brainstorm words from the story that might be used to describe the main character, and write the words on the board (5 minutes). Pair up the students and instruct them to work on the character guide and complete it with their ideas and observations about the main character (15 minutes). Then

complete a group chart of the same character guide and have the students share their responses in a whole-class setting (10 minutes).

Discuss with the class the difference between how Porcupine felt before receiving the gift of the shooting arrows (a discussion about what the arrows really are might be good right now) and how the gift changed how he treated others. Ask the students: Why do you think he changed? Why do you think Shinob, the Great One, changed his gift? Do you think Porcupine deserved it? (10 minutes)

Attachments

- [10582-8-14355-character_study_guide.pdf](#)
Character study guide/table with who, what, why, etc. columns.
- [character_web.gif](#)
A simple graphic organizer for one character from the story.

Strategies For Diverse Learners:

Struggling readers may be paired with proficient readers to read and do the study of character. The story could be read aloud to a small group and the character map filled out together. Prior reading with a volunteer or technician could also facilitate greater confidence in the students for small group instruction. Advanced students may be given the challenge to create a script for the story and perform a puppet show.

Extensions:

This traditional tale provides opportunities for theater, creating poetry, art, science (a study on defense mechanisms of animals).

Students might choreograph a movement/dance performance that shows the storyline, using characters and movement set to music; character studies based upon other traditional tales where a lesson is taught via the story involving a character is another possible extension.

Bibliography:

J. Bruchac. *Many Nations: An Alphabet of Native America*. Scholastic, 2004. ISBN #0-439-63590-X.

Character guide: Utah State Office of Education/Utah State University (see attachments on instructional guide).

"The Greedy Porcupine." An adaptation of a traditional Shoshone tale. San Juan School District Media Center, 2006.

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